

## **Remote Learning Task Force Expert Advisory Panel 2: Support to Address the Whole Child Experience, Minutes, 8/11/20**

Attendance: Lindsay, Amanda T, Amanda G., Hiroko, Lauren, Beth, Ellen, Bryan, Mariah, Susan, Maria, Rebecca Manor, Tha Chan, Linda Monach, Rebecca Sneider

Minutes approved: Hiroko, Amanda G, Amanda T, Lindsay, Beth, Ellen

### **Discussion of Proposed Plan for Fall**

Mariah – There are concerns about complexity of hybrid education and how it would work. In particular, if you have any mild symptom (sniffle, cough, etc.) you have to quarantine for 14 days or until you test negative, and there are testing delays lately, so there's potential for students to be out of school repeatedly and miss in-person days. Remote plus is intended to address the building challenges, provide stability of remote learning, and still provide opportunity for outdoor in-person learning. I'm a parent of 3 kids, this creates a real stress for working families and families whose children have additional needs. How do we make sure that parent facilitation issues this group has talked about can be considered fully in this plan.

Lauren – This was a big pivot from the previously presented plan and none of the variables really changed, it seems to me. How do you respond when Brookline has low positivity rate and falls in state's green category? I'm personally confused about what precipitated this pivot. Remote learning wasn't a source of stability in the spring. I'm puzzled by how starting remote would facilitate in-person when everything I've seen from panel 4 seems to suggest the opposite.

Mariah – As SC I'm not privy to everything that went into the decision. Panel 4 has been amazing and a top resource we're so lucky in Brookline to have. They've been clear there are 3 key things needed to open school – masking, social distancing, ventilation. Ventilation is really critical. Joe Allen presented on this about a month ago. If we listen to the science that's telling us these are the 3 things to open safely, how can we open before we have these 3 things in place? And the ventilation is not up to the standard. The building staff have been working really hard on this and mechanical ventilation systems built 20-60 years ago don't turn on a dime, it takes a lot of effort to figure out how to convert them into something we can use. If they can't be converted we go to HEPA systems at the classroom level. Also as we kicked the tires on the hybrid system in the past week it became clear how challenging it would be. If your kid sneezes on their second day back in class, and testing is really slow, your kid could be out of school for 2 weeks. What happens to them when they can't be in person, are they learning from home by themselves or joining a remote class with new kids? What does that cycling in and out feel like for kids? As Nira Pollock on Panel 4 has presented on, there's a need for quick turnaround testing. That would speed up how quickly students could get back in the classroom when they have symptoms. But we don't have that in place.

Rebecca Sneider – PSB Guidance Counselor. Socioemotional Learning needs to be part of the schedule, e.g. weekly classroom meetings built into morning meeting, and small groups meetings. It IS possible to do this well remotely and we have to do it.

Susan – Can we get agreement about what the principles are for socioemotional wellness and give us a true north for how this proposal can be assessed. Keep in mind these are sample schedules on the slides and the schedules will not be implemented exactly like this.

Lauren – Remote learning needs to not be entirely screen mediated. This much screen time is not appropriate for young children. There need to be offline activities – reading books for kids who can read, or hands-on activities.

Mariah – I agree about offline activities.

Maria – One of my concerns is that we have as much support for parents as possible. There are 2 remote learning schools in Massachusetts, one of them spoke about a “learning coach” but what they meant by that is the parent. That really highlights and emphasizes the importance of providing support to parents.

Amanda T – There needs to be assessment to identify which K-5 students don’t have a parent or babysitter available during the school day to help them navigate remote learning. These students need outreach and extra support.

Rebecca Sneider – We need to also find out which kids have executive function challenges. They will have difficulty navigating remote learning platforms and will need extra support.

Rebecca Manor – Will snack bunches and lunch bunches continue remotely?

Rebecca Sneider – I would say yes. We couldn’t do them if we were in person but we could do them remotely.

### **Feedback on K-8 Counseling Website**

Rebecca Manor – the website could mention those bunches would continue and have a way for parents to request them. In small print on the website it says “we are open virtually” – I found that reassuring, put that in large print up front. And make clear how people can get to a human being.

Mariah – Is the plan for this content to be a separate website or part of the main Brookline K-12 website? This group had a recommendation for a page that’s like if your page needs X this is who you talk to, if your kid needs Y this is who you talk to. Is that cheat sheet here somewhere?

Maria – it’s separate, there’s a link on the PSB website to it. I can change it and add information more easily and faster if it’s separate. Cheat sheet isn’t here yet.

Amanda T – Cheat sheet should be front and center – links to who to contact about various concerns and also to what parts of the website are helpful for different concerns.

Lindsay – Break it up more by age, there are somewhat different concerns and recommendations for different grade levels / developmental stages.

Hiroko – See BPEN site for a model that does this well, everything is organized in a topic specific way. <http://www.b-pen.org/>. I would like to see more clearly how this site is going to help me when I come to it. Make the website focused on the NEEDS of potential users (like the model of a retail site). Also something like mindfulness – it’s nice to have it here but it needs to be built into the curriculum as well.

Lindsay – I can aggregate recommendations if the panelists would like to send them to me.

Maria – We are developing a teacher specific site too, as there are different needs in the classroom environment. We were very intentional targeting this to parents & guardians.

Bryan – Is there a very obvious link to this website?

Mariah – It's hard to find, how can it be linked more prominently?

Lauren – Good point. If parent is going to this, they're frazzled. Also include realistic expectations about when you can get a response. If you're dealing with a thorny problem there shouldn't be a week long delay.

Bryan – Have a professional website designer organize the site. This is too many words and not enough graphics.

Amanda G - Make it as user friendly to parents as possible. what are you here for? anxiety? anger? low motivation? and then being sent to activities for their intended purpose

Linda Monach – Needs fewer and simpler words, to be accessible to all families

### **More Discussion of Current Proposal**

Lindsay – Feedback on the current proposal – emphasizing the in-person needs of K-2.

Mariah – These ages could would be prioritized in coming back as quickly as possible.

Tha Chan – Can we get more detail to what the “plus” in remote plus means? The sooner you can provide details on what plus means, it will help to alleviate some concerns there.

Amanda T – Kits for all kids of an age

Bryan – This is an opportunity to expand the definition of school. First go in thinking of socioemotional wellness, then figure out how to put the learning in. Once a child gets sick all the instructions are different after that. What if scenarios could be explored creatively ahead of time and anticipate challenges.

Ellen – We've been trying to make plans for extended day and gathering as much opportunity as we can. We need to figure out how this might work with the phasing in, and we're waiting to hear from school committee & superintendent, and about the spaces as well.

Tha Chan – Discussion of having PTO's facilitate parent connections and connections with superintendent before school start

Linda Monach - Community building activities need to include children who aren't at their home school and Metco students - we can't just include the children in the local neighborhood.

Beth - We included discussion last week - as well as the week before - about the importance of including all kids (non-home school, Metco, out-of-district) in how we think about community.

Lindsay – prioritize families who feel safe meeting teachers at the beginning of the year to have a chance to do so in person at the start of the year. Prioritize predictability and routine also – a kindergartner might really benefit from having more personalized attention initially than an older kid would but I think it's most important for it to happen as soon as possible for the youngest kids.

Amanda G - logistics, outdoor space make it hard for all students to meet in person. But it's important especially for younger kids for them to meet in person, hard for them to follow rules if there hasn't been that initial orientation.

Tha Chan – For in person would it be possible to meet during those 10 days, set aside 30 minutes to meet kids before the first day of school?

Susan – We can find out.

Mariah – It makes sense to think about if that's possible.

Susan – What are the design features we should most be thinking about? The mechanics may change, the schedule will change, but getting those principles in is really important.

Lindsay – designated time for community building, whether in morning meeting or somewhere else in schedule. And providing flexibility for students who are having difficulty with remote learning

Amanda T – Socioemotional learning as part of curriculum. Regular meetings of teachers with the parents in the class.

Lauren – Parents need a headstart on what the curriculum is going to be, more contact with teachers. Parents need more ongoing support for children to be able to succeed in this context. Tents would be a great place for community building to take place.

Mariah – SC voted last week to approve procurement of the tents.

Amanda G – If we're not sending our children back to the school building, how can we teach them to be ready to learn. We need to get our students ready to do a potential whole year in their own house. Taking time in the day to address and talk about emotional and physical wellness.

Lauren – What if teachers went to their classrooms and did their remote learning teaching from there? That sets up an expectation for the student. This was something Barbara Scotto brought up. I think that's a great idea, and would go a long way to helping children with how to set expectations.